



CONSERVATION, HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CRAC)

22nd Meeting

7, 8 and 9 November 2007 – Townsville

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The 22nd CRAC meeting was held on 7, 8 and 9 November 2007 in Townsville and included a field trip to Magnetic Island. Following is a summary of the main items discussed at the meeting.

SPECIES CONSERVATION

Members were updated on a variety of issues.

- Policy and position statements have now been finalised for the Conservation of Dugong in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Translocation of Species in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Sharks, Rays and Protected Species associated with the Queensland east Coast Inshore Finfish Fishery.
- The second edition of the Dugong Necropsy Manual is now available via the GBRMPA website:
[http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/publications/research_publications].

The Committee was also informed regarding dugong strandings in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area from January to 24 October 2007 highlighting concerns about entanglement in nets.

INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS ISSUES

The CRAC was addressed regarding Indigenous tourism. A Giringun Traditional Owner presented his views on his experiences in establishing his own Indigenous tourism venture, based on fishing and cultural tours of his country. He also addressed the broader issues associated with linking Indigenous tourism ventures and the Giringun TUMRA. Within his presentation, the TO also expressed:

- There is a need for harmony between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups and having pride in the country which is being represented;
- Indigenous applicants for tourism ventures find it difficult to produce a business plan; and
- The Giringun TUMRA is an important step in developing Indigenous economic enterprises

The CRAC noted progress on the development of Indigenous Tourism Australia's National Indigenous Tourism Strategy and progress on Giringun TUMRA tourism.

The CRAC also considers that the development of Indigenous tourism services in the GBR may be best facilitated within a GBR-wide strategic approach that identifies the unique GBR experiences available to the Brand Australia target market. Delivery of those experiences can provide the basis for decisions relating to regional tourism services for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Tourism.

The CRAC recommends that the GBRMPA seeks the views of the TRRAC on the applicability of a branding based strategic planning approach to future directions for sustainable GBR tourism with a view, in the short term, to the

identification of case study implementation areas that facilitate Indigenous tourism.

HERITAGE ISSUES

Members were briefed on:

1) An Overview of Heritage Obligations in the GBR

The GBRWHA (Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area) is shorter and wider than the GBR Province (which includes reefs in the Torres Strait) and not the same as the term "Great Barrier Reef" (which usually means the reefs and waters from the coast to the edge of the continental shelf). Sometimes documents imply that the GBR Province, the GBR and the GBRWHA are the same. The GBRMPA needs to be precise when using terminology and make it very clear that the GBR and the GBR Province are both different areas from that used for the World Heritage Area listing.

2) Implementation of the GBRMP Heritage Strategy

The CRAC commended the staff of the GBRMPA for the bringing together of complex information about the protection of Commonwealth heritage in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Heritage Strategy. It was expressed that the Strategy was seen to be a rich source of material to inform staff and the public on Commonwealth heritage issues and should form the basis for other education and communication products.

3) Lady Elliot Island (LEI) and Dent Island Draft Heritage Management Plans

Comment was sought from members on the draft Heritage Management Plans for both islands.

- It was noted that management of Commonwealth Islands is a relatively new project within the GBRMPA
- The draft plans tightly follow legislative requirements of the EPBC Act
- A formal public consultation process is also being followed

The CRAC noted the draft heritage management plans and supported the format and content. The following suggestions were made to improve the plans:

1. Include indicators to assist the evaluation of the objects of the plan each 5 years;
2. Indicate the priority for action items;
3. Clarify the actions for managing the treatment of asbestos in the LEI lightstation buildings;
4. Include a map of each site showing different land-uses and the spatial extent of the plans;
5. Combine the GBRMPA and Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) plans for Dent Island lightstation and surrounds;
6. Link the plans to proposed standards being developed to guide the appropriate use of materials for repairs and maintenance; and
7. Include in the plans other culturally important attributes of the islands.

In the case of LEI, it was noted that present seabird nesting is a reflection of the substantial changes to the island's geomorphology and biodiversity by guano miners and lightkeepers over the last 148 years. The revegetation regime established by the lightkeepers and early resort personnel has potential to adversely impact on the island's seabird nesting status.

The CRAC therefore recommends that the GBRMPA ensures that through the draft Heritage Management Plan and the Environmental Management Strategy there are adequate procedures to protect the natural environment of LEI, particularly in relation to seabirds.

4) The Draft Statement on Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the GBRWHA

A draft statement of the Outstanding Universal Value of the GBRWHA was provided to the CRAC, noting that no such statement has been formally accepted to date by the World Heritage (WH) Committee. Members were informed that:

- Nowadays, when a world heritage property is nominated, it will not be accepted unless it is accompanied by a statement of OUV.
- When developing a statement of OUV for the GBRWHA, reference should only be made to those values for which the property was accepted by the WH Committee. Only natural values were accepted for the listing of the GBRWHA. Cultural values of the GBR were not considered at the time of listing and therefore have not yet been described as WH values or tested against the criteria for listing.
- A statement of OUV is an important document that should provide the baseline from which subsequent reports are measured, so it needs to be as accurate as possible from the outset.
- The next periodic reporting cycle for WH properties is expected to start in 2009, with the GBRWHA being asked to report as part of Asia Pacific Region in 2011-12. An opportunity will exist to formally revise the statement of OUV as part of periodic reporting.

Members commented that:

- As much baseline information as possible should be included in the statement of OUV.
- The statement and its contents are excellent and should not be diluted in any way; the significance of scale is important for the statement of OUV in the GBRWHA.
- The draft statement should address the problem of changing criteria between those used for the original listing and those now required for reporting. The change in criteria may change the way attributes are assessed.

OVERVIEW OF MAGNETIC ISLAND VISIT

The CRAC visited Magnetic Island and was briefed on conservation, Indigenous, park management and planning issues, and the relationship between these issues and the application of world heritage values. The CRAC concluded that:

1. World heritage status of the island does not seem to have been adequately considered to date in planning issues; however current coastal planning legislation together with recent changes to the Queensland Integrated Planning Act should provide for better consideration of such issues;
2. It is very difficult for local community groups to demonstrate that case-by-case local planning and development decisions should be considered as a matter of National Environmental Significance under the Commonwealth EPBC Act;
3. There is no process that allows an assessment of the cumulative impacts of individual planning decisions on world heritage values of the island;

4. There appears to be a lack of understanding by community groups and local government of the world heritage values of the GBRWHA and their application to Queensland islands and marine areas within the WHA; and
5. There seems to be a need for an independent facilitation process to bring together parties to discuss world heritage issues on the island.

Accordingly, the CRAC recommends that the GBRMPA develop coastal policy guidelines for GBRMPA decision making that will assist in the taking account of the cumulative effects of development decisions.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The CRAC was provided an update on activities to deal with climate change impacts on the GBRMP and noted the extensive analyses and predictions as to likely impacts in the Vulnerability Assessment Report. The key strategies contained within the Climate Change Action Plan (2007-2012) were also discussed.

The Committee recommended that the GBRMPA:

- Promotes, as a matter of policy, 'environmental best practice to reduce carbon footprint' for all reef-based activities through collaboration rather than compliance;
- Considers the extension of the "Reef Guardian" concept to reef-based industries as a means for promoting 'environmental best practice' as a contribution to reducing climate change impacts on the GBR; and
- Ensures that 'better fishing practices' identified as an action in the Vulnerability Assessment include the recreational fishing industry

OUTLOOK REPORT UPDATE

Members were informed that:

- The framework for developing the Report has been approved by the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources.
- An Outlook Reference Group has been established to provide advice and guidance on preparation of the Report, particularly the methods used and the outputs and an Outlook Report Taskforce is now in place until December 2009.

Advice was sought from CRAC members to prioritise the top 10 pressures facing biodiversity protection, cultural heritage and the Traditional Use of Marine Resources in and adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef, also, in preparation for the next CRAC, to identify sources of information regarding relevant future trends.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 16 and 17 April 2008.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE	
Mr Doug Baird	Tourism and Recreation
Ms Kate Davey	Non-Government Organisation, Conservation
Dr Kirstin Dobbs	GBRMPA
Mrs Christine Doherty	Indigenous
Dr Pat Hutchings	Non-Government Organisation, Ecologist
Mr Bruce Leaver	Dept of the Environment and Water Resources
Dr Ghislaine Llewellyn	Non-Government Organisation, Conservation
Mr Justin McCaul	Non-Government Organisation, Conservation
Prof Helene Marsh	Scientific Community
Mr Peter Ogilvie	Qld Environmental Protection Agency
Assoc Prof Stephan Schnierer	Indigenous
Mr Bernie Singleton	Indigenous
Ms Cathy Skippington	Qld Environmental Protection Agency
Dr Andrew Tobin	Commercial Fishing
Assoc Prof Peter Valentine	Conservation, World Heritage, Protected Area Management
Mr Simon Woodley	Independent Chairman